

To the Two Most Honourable Houses, The Lords and Commons in Parliament Assembled, An Humble Representation of the Sad and Distressed Case of many Thousands of Their Most Gracious Majesties Loyal Seamen, or their Widows, Aged Parents, or other Friends or Relations, and an Humble Supplication in behalf of all the said Distressed, and all other the Seamen of England and Scotland,

Humbly Sheweth,

**T**HAT whereas by the Blessing of God on Their Majesties and these Nations, the Seamen of England and Scotland have been intirely in the Interest of Their Majesties, and Defence of these Nations: But in their said Service have many Thousands lost their Lives by the Sword or Sicknes: And whereas it hath been the Custom for Two Years last past, at pay of the Fleet in the Spring, to pay only such as appeared in Person on Board their several Ships, so that those who lost their Lives against the French, under the Valiant and Loyal Commander, Admiral Ruffel, and all those who are discharged, Dead, or Sick, or Lame, or other wise, or turn'd over from Ship to Ship, and could not appear on Board in Person were ordered themselves, or their Wives, Widows, Aged Parents, or other Relations, to Attend at Broad-street for the Ships to be Re-call'd for Payment, and in order to Pay the said Distressed Widows and others, there was a List put up in October 1692, of about 166 Ships to be paid; But after the waiting of Thousands from Week to Week, and Month to Month, there was not one quarter part of the said Ships paid all that Year after, and so there was Twelve or Fifteen Thousand Men unpaid, as by the said Ships Books may appear. And to add to the Misery of many after long waiting of Thousands, some Books were like to be made up before they were paid: But on an Humble Petition to Her Most Gracious Majesty in Council, there was an order to relieve the said Distressed, by the paying them their Wages earned with the loss of some Thousands of their Lives, and a List put up in Broadstreet of near Two Hundred Ships, and about Thirty Thousand Men to be paid, as by the List at the Navy Office, and the Books of the several Ships will appear, it being put up in September last, and not one quarter of the said Distressed paid to this Day, whereby many distressed Widows and Families are under very fore Affliction, as by these particulars following may appear:

*First*, There are many Ships that have above Four Years Pay due already, and Six dead or Discharged to, and that came home, and were paid, those Ships are put up, some after a Hundred, and some after a Hundred and Sixty Ships, so that if there be but Forty or Fifty Ships paid in a Year, it will be above Two Years more before the said Distressed Widows and others will be paid for that Money that was Earned above Four Years past, as by the List a Copy of which ready to be presented may appear more at large.

*Secondly*, Some Ships are put up Twice or Thrice to be paid some Moneths one time, and some Moneths another time, and at so great a distance, that some is like to be paid one Year, and some another, which might have been paid altogether, and been a great Ease to the Honourable Commissioners and Pay-Masters, and Relieved the sad Afflicted and Distressed from waiting Year after Year as they have done already, many of them.

*Thirdly*, Many of these Distressed Families live in the North and West of England, and many Widows in Scotland, It may prove a more Miserable Charge or Loss to some to wait for their Pay at such an Uncertainty, than to loose it quite.

*Fourthly*, Many Seamen being turned over into Two or Three Ships, and have Pay due in every one of them; and they being many times sent out to Sea, and they cannot appear in their Persons sometimes at the Pay of the Fleet, whereby many of them have neither Money to buy their Families Bread, or themselves Clothes for Their Majesties Service without Credit.

*Fifthly*, And indeed several of the said Seamen, or their Distressed Families having nothing but Credit to live upon year after year, and some that have trusted them for Rent, Clothes, Victuals, and other Necessaries; these nor being paid, are

some of them almost Ruin'd also, and others that have to incourage Their Majesties Service. and Their Seamen taken the Pay of some of the said Seamen at the full Value, and others given them within Three or Four Shillings in the Pound ready Money for the same, and neither they nor the Seamen, neither the Tradesmen and others being paid, the Seamen and their Families are now brought into so grear distress for the want of Money or Credit as formerly they had.

*Sixthly*, That the Seamen or their Wives are forced to go from place to place to any Extortioner that will buy their Tickets, and pay at Ten Shillings in the Pound loss, as several have done, and sometimes more than half loss.

*Seventhly*, And the said Seamen are forced to give Bond to those that buy the same at half loss, that if Their Majesties do not pay it in a prefixed time, then the said Seamen must make it good, whereby the Seamen are several of them in Bonds for time to come, to the great discouragement of Their Majesties Seamen; and many of them have this last Year deserted Their Majesties Service, as by the several Ships Books will appear.

*Eighthly*, The Seamen or their Families must live on Credit, or be Relieved by Charity, until they are paid; or if not, some of their Families must perish. And if that Sickness or Death of Seamen, or the being turned over from Ship to Ship should hinder the being paid: Or if the Extortioners be suffered to buy their Pay at half loss, that they cannot pay their Debts, it cannot then be safe, for Landlords, Tradesmen, or Chandlers to trust to Seamen for time to come.

*Ninthly*, But it may be presumed by all good Men, that neither Their Most Excellent and Gracious Majesties, neither the Just, Honourable and Loyal *English* Nobility, and Knights and Gentry being now Assembled in Parliament, have ever been rightly informed of the distressed Case of the said deplorable Seamen or their Families, and there is not any Cause to doubt, but on an Humble Information of the Case aforesaid, they will be more ready abundantly to Relieve the same, than any can be to inform them of the sadness of the Case, which cannot be expressed in a few words.

*Tenthly*, And if the Honourable House of Commons, who have Voted so Loyally and Heartily, as Faithful to Their Majesties and these Nations for Money for the Seamen, would Appropriate Four or Five Thousand Pound the Week to be constantly paid for the Relief of the Distressed, they Might be all paid by Michaelmas next, and in that time it may be supposed there will be Fifteen Thousand more to pay at *Broad-street*: If as it may be supposed that Time and Money will not admit of paying any this Spring at the *Nore* or *Portsmouth*, because of sending out the Fleet Early, and if so there having been Two or Three Thousand dead in the *West-India* Fleet this Year, and many Thousands dead or discharged by Sickness or Lameness, or otherwise, or turned over in the Grand Fleet, so that Their Majesties will have a continual use of Credit; And your Honours now you are informed of the State of the Case, may order Relief, as your Honours in great Wisdom shall think fit; And I would in behalf of Their Majesties Seamen humbly intreat your Honours, That,

*First*, It might be so ordered, That the Ships that have been unpaid above Four Years may be paid first, and so every Ship that hath Pay longest due might be paid next.

*Secondly*, And that a new List might be put up of all the Ships unpaid in the Order aforesaid for the Relief of the said Distressed.

*Thirdly*, That there might be Publick Notice given in the *Gazete* how many Ships are put up, and when to begin the same, and so every Moneth to give notice how far they have gone.

*Fourthly*, And by this means all the Seamens Widows in *England* and *Scotland* might give a near guess when to expect their Money.

*Fifthly*, And I would in behalf of the said Widows intreat your Honours that those Ships that have Money due at Two or Three Payments, that is, that have been paid Three times on Board before they are cleared on the Shoar, may be put up to be paid all the Pay due in each Ship for the said Three Divisions to be paid all at once; and in so doing, you would save the Miserable Distressed from waiting Year after Year two or three times for One Sum of Money.

*Sixthly*, If this Method were taken, it would be the way to put New Life into the Seamen, and if that it were once known, that so soon as Their Majesties and the



Two Honourable Houses were informed of their Misery, that they had Relief Order'd, and Publick Notice given in the *Gazette* that they were all order'd to be paid in reasonable time, it would be the way to encourage the Wives, and Parents, and Masters of the Seamen in every Sea-Port-Town in *England*, to let their Husbands or Children, or Servants go freely into Their Majesties Service, as finding that it was only a Misfortune not inform'd of that caused so many Widows or Aged Parents to be unpaid, but that now come Life, come Death, or come turning over from Ship to Ship, still Their Majesties Pay is the most safe and certain Pay in *England*, and none to be esteemed of like Excellence for certainty.

*Seventhly*, And I would humbly inform the Honourable Houses, That if there were a Committee Appointed to hear the Grievances of the Seamen or their Families that might order Publick Notice at the Pay-Office and Navy-Office, and also in the *Gazette*, That if any Seamen have been either Cheated of their Tickets by any Clerks of their Ships, or have had their Pay Received wrongfully, or their Tickets Detained wrongfully, or been Trick't out of them for a small Value, that in those Cases they should be heard freely, and have Justice done them, it would perhaps be a great Relief to many, and also be encouragement to all the Seamens Families in *England*, for to serve Their Majesties, as finding that they cannot be wronged, without it be their own fault: and if they will manifest their wrong, they shall have what Relief can be expected; and in doing this, your Honours will also save a great deal of Trouble to Their Majesties Honourable Commissioners of the Navy, that they might not be interrupted with such a multitude of Petitions now they are concerned in so much business of a great Nature in other Affairs of the Navy.

*Eighthly*, I would in behalf of the said Seamen humbly beg, That if it could be prevented, they might not be indeed simply Cowardly, or otherwise, Delivered up to the *French*, as the *Jersey*, *Diamond*, or some other Ships have been; and also that there might be care taken not to allow any Officer to hide or steal Powder enough to blow them up, as the *Exeter* was, and if not, also the *Breda*; and that there might not be so many Ships knockt on the head in good Weather, as the *Windfor-Castle* was, and several more, and some drown'd, whereby in all these Cases the Seamen suffer loss of Clothes, if not of Life and Liberty; and perhaps Their Majesties have lost 30 or 40 Ships, to the Value of a Million of Money, and in so little time, as no Age can parallel, and except the *Anne* and the *Portsmouth*, and perhaps Ten or Twelve more, most of the rest were made away so strangely, without fair Valiant Fighting, as Brave Old *English* Men used to do, that some of them have looked like Ships Murdered I do not know how; And if your Honours would but inquire into it, perhaps I may give you most of the Ships Names so lost; but perhaps it will be hard to find the reason how some were lost: But if you should ask me if it were from Heaven or of Men, it may be I might with submission say, If it were from Men, then if they are found faulty they should be punished; and if from Heaven, then Humiliation, Supplication and Reformation were the way to prevent it for time to come, and so it would be well if the Reverend the Bishops would send a Sound Pious Minister of the Church of *England* into every Man of War, to be a Man of Sobriety and good Conversation, and also a Man of Courage to Reprove every Vice he hath opportunity conveniently to do, and to Rebuke and Exhort, and that he might read the Prayers of the Church twice every Day, and also Read Two Homilies every Sunday out of that most Excellent Book of Homilies, worth its weight in Gold, and worthy to be kept in every *English* Mans House, which was set forth in King *Edward* the Sixths dayes, and in Queen *Elizabeths*, and Three Kings Reigns since, and Established by the Church of *England* in the Thirty Nine Articles, and therein the Seamen might hear that Swearing and Cursing, and other Enormities, are things that the Church abhors, and that Sobriety, Vertue, Repentance, and Holyness are not Novelty nor Phanatical, but the real Fundamental Doctrine of the Church of *England*, and such, as all that own the Church, ought to stand by, unless they pretend one thing, and do another; And indeed it is most dreadful to think, that any called Christians should Night and Day be Calling on God to Damn them, and the Devil to Damn them, as if they thought they could not have it time enough without ingaging God to send it, and the Devil to Execute it, and I suppose all the Histories of the *Heathens* and *Indians* cannot parallel such abominable a Practice; But to endeavour to Reform, this must be left to your Honours Great Wisdom and Judgment; and I would intreat your Honours Pardon for my mentioning this:

But

But however, as the Church taketh Care to pray dayly for a Blessing on the War, so if any thing could be prevented that called for a Curse, it would be a great Mercy to these Nations: And as there is and must be a Continual Necessity of Seamen in Peace and War, so long as the World indure, so it were to be wished, that there could be some wayes found out for their incouragement in the Service, and for the better Regulating their Conversation; and they for the most part not being used to take Care to lay up for their Families beforehand, it is a very great misery as to their Families to be kept out of Money Four or Five Years; and if your Honours would consider whether it be for their Majesties Interest for Ships to stay Abroad Three or Four Years, and Bury or Discharge Sick, or otherwise Six times as many as they bring home; whereas if they went and came every Year as the Merchant-Ships do, they would Increase Seamen, and Incourage their Families also; and if there could be a Method found out that there might not any be suffered to Administer, as their Wives, who are not, or to Receive their Pay without a Lawful Power, it might peradventure save the Seamen their Pay more secure, and save a great deal of Trouble and Difficulty to Their Majesties Commissioners in Payment, and also peradventure save some Thousands of Pounds to Their Majesties for time to come in some Nature, which perhaps Their Majesties, and neither your Honours know not of; for it falls out sometimes that there are many Dead or gone out of Ships, that none of their Friends knew where they were; and I suppose Their Majesties deserve the Money before Strangers; And I wish there were also some way found out to incourage Seamen for Their Majesties Service, to look out on the Top of the Mast sometimes for the *French*, that they that see them first, might have a Reward, since it is so strange a thing, that the Sea should be so full of *French*, a Merchant-Man can hardly go without Convoy, but he is taken; and yet that the Sea should be so clear of *French*, that our Men of War can seldom see them; I suppose the *French* have good Eyes, and as Cats, have liberty to run all over the House to Catch a Mouse, and are not Chained up as Mastiffs that can hurt none, except they come in the length of their Chain: And if your Honours would send for some of the Seamen to give an Account to some Committee what Incouragement they have when they do happen to take a Ship, whether they have any more than they can hide, or is not worth taking from them; And indeed, as Their Majesties do Reward those who loose Lives and Limbs, so it were to be wished they that live had some more Incouragement also; and it were to be wished that the Merchants would give some Incouragement to those who do lose their Lives in Their Service or their Limbs, and would not suffer them to Pay so much to Chirurgeons for their Cure; neither that any of them shou'd be forced to go to Law for their Wages after they have gotten their Ships home clear from the Enemies, that so they might be more encouraged also; and that if any Men were almost half starved, at any time, either coming from the *Indies*, or elsewhere, they might be allowed, to their Pocket, the Value of what is pinched out of their Bellies. This Their Majesties do for all Men of War, if there be occasion, and it is pitty that the Merchant Ships do not so also. But I must most Humbly intreat Your Honours Gracious Pardon, and that the poor distressed may not suffer for the unworthiness of my Requesting their Case; and may their Prayers, and the Blessings of the Eternal *JEHOVAH*, the Blessed and Glorious *Trinity* in *Unity*, and *Unity* in *Trinity*, Rest on the Heads and Hearts of Their Most Gracious Majesties, and all your Honours, and these Nations, and on your Honours Humble Servant, and his Family to Command,

Hermitage, June 19th.  
1693.

William Hodges.